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Report of the Working Group on the future operation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

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1. The Working Group on the future operation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 56/125 of 19 December 2001, by which the Assembly, inter alia, decided:

> "(a) To establish a working group composed of two governmental representatives from each of the five regional groups of the United Nations and one representative of the host country, the mandate of the working group being to make recommendations to the General Assembly before the end of the fifty-sixth session, for its consideration by the end of 2002, on the future operation of the Institute".

2. Pursuant to operative paragraph 4 (a) of the aforementioned resolution, the Working Group submitted its report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, containing recommendations on the future operation of INSTRAW.[1]

3. On 20 December 2002, the General Assembly adopted resolution 57/175, by which, inter alia:

(a) In operative paragraph 2, it endorsed the recommendations made by the Working Group[1] and requested the Secretary-General to implement the measures recommended by the Working Group in that regard;

(b) In operative paragraph 3, it decided to extend the mandate of the Working Group in order to follow up the implementation of the measures referred to in paragraph 2 of resolution 57/175, in close consultation with the Secretary-General;

(c) In operative paragraph 8, it requested the Working Group to submit a preliminary report on the follow-up to the implementation of the measures referred to in paragraph 2 of resolution 57/175 to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session, and to submit its final report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session;

[1] A/57/330 and Add.1.

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(d) In operative paragraph 9 (a), it requested the Secretary-General to appoint, without delay, and in consultation with the Working Group, a Director to be chosen from among candidates who demonstrate knowledge and expertise in, inter alia, gender issues and social research;

(e) In operative paragraph 9 (b), it requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of resolution 57/175.

4. The present report is submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session in implementation of operative paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 57/175.

5. In follow-up to the measures endorsed by the General Assembly in paragraph 2 of resolution 57/175, the Working Group undertook the actions described in paragraphs 6 to 11 below.

6. On 10 February 2003, pursuant to paragraph 9 (a) of General Assembly resolution 57/175, at the request of the Chairman of the Working Group, the Permanent Representative of Spain, a meeting was held with the representatives of the Secretariat to request the Secretary-General to appoint without delay a Director for INSTRAW, in consultation with the Working Group, to provide the Institute with the appropriate, permanent and necessary leadership to resume its work and to proceed to initiate the necessary steps for the fund-raising that would enable it to operate.

7. The meeting was attended by the Chairman of the Working Group, the Permanent Representative of Spain, the Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic — the host country of the Institute, Mrs. Louise Frechette, Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Mrs. Angela King, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for INSTRAW.

8. The representatives of the Secretariat expressed the view that the appointment of a Director was not possible at the moment because the funds available for INSTRAW amounted to US$ 435,000, including the US$ 250,000 assigned from the Organization's regular budget, as stipulated by the General Assembly in its decision 57/580, and that those funds would only be sufficient to cover the salaries of the current staff of INSTRAW as well as contracts and operational expenses until 31 May 2003, after which additional fund-raising would be necessary through voluntary contributions.

9. On 12 February 2003, another meeting on the status of voluntary contributions for INSTRAW, open to interested delegations, was convened by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

10. Having heard the information provided by the Secretariat on the financial situation of INSTRAW, the Permanent Representative of Spain pledged on behalf of his Government a contribution of US$ 100,000 and promised another contribution in a similar amount, once a Director had been appointed for INSTRAW. The representative of Venezuela pledged on behalf of his Government a contribution of US$ 5,520, stating that even though this was a modest amount owing to the financial difficulties that his country was experiencing, it represented the commitment and support of Venezuela for INSTRAW. The representative of the Dominican Republic,

host country of INSTRAW, reiterated the permanent support that his Government had always offered to the Institute.

11. The Under-Secretary-General expressed gratitude for the pledges made, recognized that together with the existing funds and the pledges made there should be enough funds to permit the prompt appointment of a Director for INSTRAW[2] and promised to meet with the Comptroller of the United Nations without delay to coordinate the appointment.

12. On 20 February 2003, the Working Group on the future operation of INSTRAW held its first meeting to consider its programme of work in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 57/175. At that meeting, the Working Group decided to prepare its report to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session and to consult with the Secretary-General regarding the appointment of a Director for INSTRAW without further delay. On the basis of a review of its previous reports, the Working Group also decided to raise with the Secretariat the possibility of postponing the election, currently scheduled for the resumed organizational session of the Economic and Social Council for 2003, of the five members of the INSTRAW Board of Trustees whose mandates end on 30 June 2003.

13. The Working Group discussed the procedural steps that should be taken for the fulfilment of its mandate. It highlighted the need for the Economic and Social Council to amend the statute of INSTRAW.

14. The Working Group adopted the present report at its second meeting, held on 28 February 2003.

[2] See General Assembly decision 57/580.